

# Bombers Over Rivington 1942

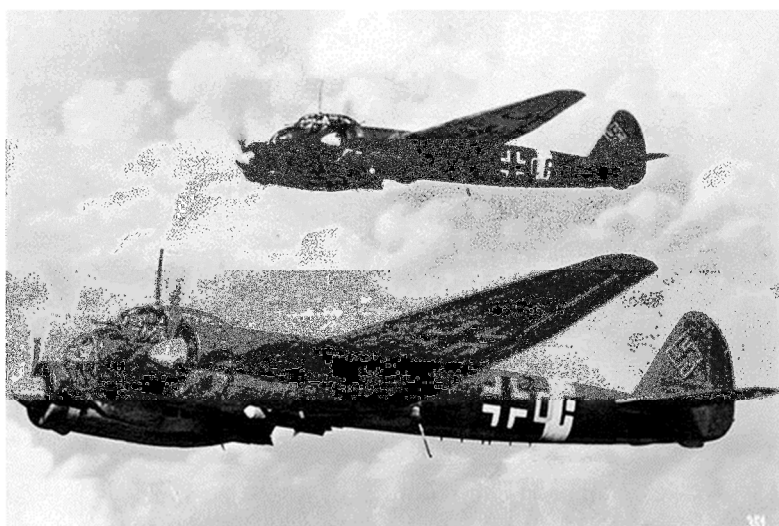
Former classified documents of interviews of prisoners of war of the German Luftwaffe reveal a top secret bombing raid, its pilots only given the target details on the morning of the raid, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1942, it was flown by the Germans most experienced crews for a very low level attack by two Junkers Ju 88 bombers, flying heavy on minimum fuel, skimming the waves and just over tree tops carrying on its wings four 250kg bombs with 8 second delay fuses and a mixed load of 50kg HE and 1kg incendiaries and its flight path used the Rivington reservoirs as navigation at six minutes zero altitude completing the bombing raid at 60ft.



The German squadron was 2nd Staffel of Kustenfliegergruppe 106 based based at Dinard / Pleurtuit airfield Brittany, (2nd Coastal Command Group 106) led Squadron commander Hans Bergemann, (left) persuaded his superior Group Commander Major Ghert Roth that a daytime bombing mission to target the De Havilland factory at Lostock was possible, he was ambitious and seeking medals. The factory was a major manufacturer of variable pitch propellers, the main supplier to all the UK aeroplane manufacturers, Bergemann was a trusted and experienced pilot.

The mission was subject to full radio silence, bombers left base at 1.30pm to fly to Lanveoc-Poulmic near Brest to be loaded with bombs, they took off for their mission at 6pm using rocket assisted take off due to the weight. Their target was the De Havilland aircraft factory Lostock near Horwich. Bolton.

## **In Ju 88 coded M2+KK:**



Hptm Hans Bergemann (pilot)  
Ogefr Bernhard Müller (observer)  
Uffz Ernst Fahning (wireless)  
Uffz Johann Fickenwirth (air gunner)

## **In the second Ju 88 M2+BK:**

Fw Heinz Majer (pilot)  
Ogefr Horst Weiberny (observer)  
Uffz Karl Schachtschneider (wireless)  
Uffz Theobald Frank (air gunner)

## **JU 88'a distinctive glass nose cone**

The flight inbound was via the Irish Sea at wave height, toward the Isle of Man, at which point their presence became known to IOM defences on detecting German Elecktra 2 signals.

On detection Royal Observer Corps were now monitoring the bombers. On reaching IOM the bombers turned hard right to the Ribble estuary at 7.45pm, their task was to navigate via the Rivington reservoir's to the find their target. In Manchester air raid sirens were sounded for what was logged as 'raid 299' at Manchester and the raid was given number 301 by New Mills. The German bombers encountered no opposition from British fighters inbound.

Their plan was to be at six minutes at zero feet over Rivington reservoir's then south, rising to 60ft for the final stage for what would have been a huge bombing raid on Lostock, taking them over Horwich. By the grace of God unexpected low cloud cover on approach to Rivington caused the bombers to lose direction, taking the mission off course, the bombers had passed over a number of very significant strategic, sites.

Yet the bombers continued on at their very low altitude, "blowing the leaves off tree's" was a description given by an eye witness, now heading toward sleepy Derbyshire where no air raid warning was given, the bombers were now heading to their escape route toward Schipol.

The bombs were released at New Mills near the River Goyt, Mousley Bottom Gasworks and Torrs Gorge near Torr Vale Mill, a railway line as the second plane had released two bombs near a railway viaduct , then headed toward a cricket ground and housing on Church Rd where they dropped incendiaries whilst also firing indiscriminately, then went on to bombing Low Leighton Road they then flew via down Sett Valley to Hayfield then onto Kinder Scout, then toward Chatsworth House blowing in some of its windows, they dropped their final bombs on a Dalton Quarry Tarmac plant and after went to re-establish their escape. Spitfires from 303 Squadron piloted by Polish pilots brought them down around 8.30pm near Baumber and between Aswardby and Harrington in Lincolnshire.

## **RAF 303 Squadron**

**Yellow Section**, comprised of two Supermarine Spitfires Mk VB

Yellow 1 – Flt Sgt Kazimierz Wunsche (AB151 – RF-F)

Yellow 2 – Flt Sgt Mieczyslaw Popek (BL670 – RF-K)

**White Section**, comprised of two Supermarine Spitfires Mk VB

White 1 – Plt Off Tadeusz Kolečki (AR318 – RF-L)

White 2 – Sgt Aleksander Rokitnicki (W3948 – RF-C)





World War 2, German aerial imagery in hands of Luftwaffe of Lostock target